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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Culture of peace

Social development

Elimination of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Letter dated 22 August 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit to you the appeal of the participants at the Fourth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, adopted in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, on 31 May 2012 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex were to be issued as a document of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 14, 15, 27 and 67.

(*Signed*) Byrganym **Aitimova**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan
to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 22 August 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Appeal of the participants of the Fourth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

Astana, 30-31 May 2012

We, the participants of the Fourth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, are united in recognizing the divinely established destiny, dignity and inalienable rights of human beings. We express our desire for and commitment to peace and harmony as the only option that will give humanity a better future.

We express deep gratitude to the Republic of Kazakhstan for its noble initiative to promote dialogue among religions and cultures in order to enhance mutual respect, understanding and cooperation among peoples, States and the followers of different religions for the common good of humankind.

We believe that religion is one of the most important and influential tools for addressing existing social problems and achieving peace and prosperity for all.

We express our willingness to join with political and social leaders in taking appropriate action to respond to current spiritual, ethical and moral challenges, including extremism and terrorism perpetrated in the name of religion.

On behalf of all those who adhere to different religions and spiritual traditions, we recognize the shared values of mutual respect, understanding and concord, which are promoted through interfaith dialogue. The importance of those values gives us the hope and conviction that in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the human community will continue to strive for faith, friendship, solidarity, justice and constructive activity. To that end, we should take full advantage of the different religions and cultures of the world.

We consider that strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations of society and reviving traditional family values are essential for the world's sustainable development and for understanding the meaning and aim of human life. We are convinced that people and organizations should recognize, respect and fully support the constructive role of women in the family and in society.

The world's future is in the hands of young people. We affirm the importance of developing positive directions in life for our youth and strengthening their moral grounding, spiritual development and advancement through education at all levels.

Young people today should have the right to acquire thorough knowledge of their religious traditions from an early age, in the same way that they study their mother tongue, history and culture. We are convinced that people who know about their own religion will never denigrate the faith of others.

We are certain that these qualities will enable the world to avoid self-destruction and strengthen its potential for development.

We are concerned at the unremitting wars and interethnic conflicts, the rise in crime, and the emergence of religious intolerance and radicalism, which are causing violence in different parts of the world. In keeping with our religious traditions, we condemn the threat or use of force in any form and call upon all States to work together in order to solve these problems through dialogue.

We are convinced that the only way to make the world safe is through dialogue based on the principles of mutual respect and understanding, empathy and forgiveness, justice and solidarity, and peace and harmony. In that respect, we call for the further development of mechanisms for cooperation among different religious communities, political leaders, international organizations and civil society.

We support the Council of Religious Leaders, whose aim is to further deepen mutual understanding and cooperation among the representatives of different religions.

We appeal to all people of good faith to lend their support and join together in building a just, safe and flourishing world.

We wish every human being peace, security and prosperity.